

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 NSC-05

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R 301015Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1951

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMCONSUL CHIENG MAI

SECDEF WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

CAMP H M SMITH HI

COMIPAC HONOLULU HI

J-2 BKK THAI

DEPCHIEF UDORN RTAFB

13AF ASIC CLARK AFB RP

USSAG/IN NKP RTAFB THAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 9331

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MOPS, LA

SUBJECT: GERMAN ACCOUNT OF OCCUPATION OF BAN HOU EI SAI

REF: VIENTIANE 9298

1. SERGEANT MAJOR HORST SCHLUETER, FRG EMBASSY, SAIGON
RELATED TO EMBOFF ON DECEMBER 30 DETAILS OF HIS DETENTION
AT BAN HOU EI SAI BEGINNING DECEMBER 24 AND HIS SUBSEQUENT
RELEASE WITH DR. BODO SCHUETT AND THREE FRENCH TOURISTS
AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 27.

2. SCHLUETER FIRST ALERTED TO SITUATION NIGHT OF
DECEMBER 23-24 BY SOUNDS OF SMALL ARMS FIRE AND EXPLO-
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SIONS. FOLLOWING MORNING HE OBSERVED DISSIDENT FAR

TROOPS IN UNIFORM WITH U.S. WEAPONS (M16 RIFLE, M79 GRENADE LAUNCHER) AND PATHET LAO TROOPS ARMED WITH SAME U.S. WEAPONS AND AK47'S. PL ALSO HAD BACK-PACK RADIOS RESEMBLING U.S. PRC-8'S. PL WERE NOT IN REGULAR UNIFORM BUT WORE MIXED CIVILIAN-TYPE CLOTHING, MOSTLY BLACK. SCHLUETER WAS UNABLE TO IDENTIFY OFFICERS SINCE NO INSIGNIA OF RANK WORN. LEADERS OF GROUP APPEARED TO BE PL AND STUDENTS RATHER THAN DISSIDENT FAR TROOPS.

3. DURING THREE-DAY PERIOD TROOP LEVEL INCREASED FROM APPROXIMATELY 100 TO 300, WITH ADDITIONAL PL SOLDIERS ACCOUNTING FOR MOST OF THE INCREASE. ONE MEMBER OF GROUP OF SOLDIERS DINING IN LOCAL RESTAURANT INTRODUCED HIMSELF TO SCHLUETER IN ENGLISH AS A PATHET LAO. GROUP ATTEMPTED TO PAY BILL WITH "RED KIP" BUT PROPRIETOR WOULD NOT ACCEPT THE CURRENCY. SCHLUETER, WHO HAS SERVED IN SAIGON FOR TWO YEARS, SAW NO RPT NO ETHNIC VIETNAMESE AMONG PL TROOPS AND DISCOUNTS ALLEGATIONS OF NVA PARTICIPATION.

4. FOOD STOCKS, WITH EXCEPTION OF RICE, WERE RAPIDLY DEPLETED AND MORNING MARKET CLOSED ON DECEMBER 26. SOME PRODUCE WAS AVAILABLE FROM STREET VENDORS. SCHLUETER STATED THAT TROOPS DID NOT HARASS LOCAL POPULACE AND WERE ON GOOD BEHAVIOR EXCEPT DURING DRINKING BOUT NIGHT OF DECEMBER 24. GUARDS WERE STATIONED EVERY 100 METERS IN TOWN AND RIVER TRAFFIC ACROSS MEKONG TO THAILAND WAS SUSPENDED. SCHLUETER ONE NIGHT OFFERED LOCAL VILLAGER U.S. \$100 TO FERRY HIM ACROSS THE RIVER BUT VILLAGER DECLINED THE OFFER, INDICATING DEGREE OF CONCERN FELT BY LOCAL POPULACE.

5. SCHLUETER, DR. SCHUETT AND THREE FRENCH TOURISTS WERE EVICTED FROM THEIR HOTEL ROOMS MORNING OF DECEMBER 27 BECAUSE HOTEL WAS TO BE USED AS MEETING SITE BY PGNU/JCCIA NEGOTIATORS AND REBEL LEADERS BUT STATIONED THEMSELVES OUTSIDE HOTEL AND MANAGED TO SPEAK TO A FAR GENERAL OFFICER (PRESUMABLY MR-I DEPUTY COMMANDER GENERAL VANNASAENG) AS HE ENTERED HOTEL. SCHLUETER AND OTHERS SAID THEY SIMPLY WANTED PERMISSION TO LEAVE. SOMETIME LATER A STUDENT

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LEADER CAME OUT TO TELL THEM THEY WERE PERMITTED (IF NOT ORDERED) TO LEAVE, AND THEY CORSSSED RIVER TO CHIANG KHONG AFTERNOON DECEMBER 27.
WHITEHOUSE

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